

IN THE CLAIMS

1-32. (cancelled)

33. (previously presented) A method to offset stack pages of successive print or copy jobs that are supplied to a page output unit as a page stream, comprising the steps of:

offset stacking pages of a successive second job over pages of a preceding first job by spatially offsetting the pages of the successive second job with respect to the pages of the preceding first job; and

mechanically fixing an uppermost page of the first job by a continuous downward pressure onto a top surface of said uppermost page of the first job after the offset stacking of the pages of the first job and during the offset stacking of all of the pages of the second job.

34. (previously presented) A method according to claim 33, said step of fixing ensues in a region of the uppermost page that is not covered by pages of the second job due to the spatial displacement of the pages of the second job relative to the first job.

35. (previously presented) A method according to claim 33, wherein said step of fixing uses said downward pressure on the uppermost page at a region of a corner of the page.

36. (currently amended) A method according to claim 33, wherein the pressure is mechanically exerted by a paper hold-down ~~pad~~ pad.

37. (withdrawn) A method according to claim 33, wherein the downward pressure which is exerted comprises a positive pressure of a gas or gas mixture.

38. (withdrawn) A method according to claim 37, wherein the gas or the gas mixture comprises air.

39. (withdrawn) A method according to claim 37, further comprising the step of:

generating said positive pressure for the pressure on the uppermost page by a compressor that is also used to generate positive pressure to separate page-shaped recording media from a stack.

40. (withdrawn) A method according to claim 37, further comprising the step of:

adjusting a strength of said positive pressure dependent on a weight of the pages.

41. (previously presented) A method according to claim 33, wherein said offset stacking ensues in an output device of a printer or copy device.

42. (previously presented) A method according to claim 33, wherein said step of offset stacking is carried out in a page acceptance region that is bordered by first and second stoppers, said stoppers each including a front wall and a side wall arranged at a right angle thereto, and further comprising the steps of:

laterally displacing the pages;

using a first paddlewheel for said offset stacking of the first pages of the first job, said first paddlewheel being provided in a region of the first stopper to advance the first pages with their corners into the right angle of the first stopper;

using a second paddlewheel for the offset stacking of the second pages of the second job, said second paddlewheel being provided in a region of the second stopper to advance the second pages with their corners into the right angle of the second stopper; and

performing said step of mechanical fixing in the region of each stopper.

43. (previously presented) A method according to claim 42, further comprising the steps of:

shifting one of said first and second paddlewheels and a device to mechanically fix the pages along an axle for a format change-over of the pages.

44. (previously presented) A method according to claim 42, wherein said paddlewheels and a device to mechanically fix the uppermost page are mechanically and rigidly connected with one another.

45. (previously presented) A method according to claim 33, further comprising the step of:

mechanically fixing an uppermost page of a second page stack to the second page stack after offset stacking of the second job and while a

subsequently third job is offset stacked without displacement with regard to the first page stack.

46. (previously presented) A method according to claim 45, wherein said step of mechanically fixing of the uppermost page of the second page stack ensues in a region of the uppermost page that is not covered by pages of the third job due to spatial displacement of said second page stack from said third job.

47. (previously presented) A method according to claim 33, further comprising the step of:

raising a fixing device for an uppermost page of a preceding job again after offset stacking of a plurality of pages of a further subsequent job.

48. (previously presented) A method according to claim 33, wherein the job is a print job.

49. (previously presented) A method according to claim 33, wherein the job is a copy job.

50. (previously presented) A method according to claim 33, wherein said fixing of the uppermost page is performed with a positive pressure, and a device to fix the uppermost page includes a valve that is opened and closed under control of a vertical position of the device for fixing.

51. (previously presented) A method according to claim 50, further comprising the step of:

controlling the vertical position of the device to fix with a control shaft which also controls a vertical position of a paddlewheel to offset stack the print or copy job, the device to fix and the paddlewheel moving in opposing directions.

52. (previously presented) A device to offset stacked pages of successive print or copy jobs that are supplied to a page output unit as a page stream, comprising:

a page offset stacking apparatus which is operable to offset stacked pages of a successive second job over pages of a preceding first job so that said pages of said second job and said pages of said first job are spatially offset with respect to one another;

a fixing device which mechanically fixes an uppermost page of the first job by a continuous downward pressure onto a top surface of said uppermost page of the first job after the offset stacking of the pages of the first job and during the offset stacking of all of the pages of the second job.

53. (previously presented) A device according to claim 52, wherein said fixing device is disposed in a region of the uppermost page that is not covered by pages of the second job due to the spatial displacement.

54. (previously presented) A device according to claim 52, wherein said fixing device is operable to exert a pressure on the uppermost page at a region of a corner of the page.

55. (previously presented) A device according to claim 52, wherein the pressure is mechanically exerted by a paper hold-down pad as said fixing device.

56. (previously presented) A device as claimed in claim 52, wherein the pressure is exerted with elastic force.

57. (withdrawn) A device according to claim 52, wherein the pressure is exerted by a positive pressure of a gas or gas mixture as said fixing device.

58. (withdrawn) A device according to claim 57, wherein said gas or gas mixture comprises air.

59. (Withdrawn) A device according to claim 57, further comprising:
a compressor connected to said fixing device to generate said positive pressure, said compressor being connected to provide positive pressure to separate page-shaped recording media from a stack.

60. (withdrawn) A device according to claim 57, whereby a control is provided with which a strength of the positive pressure is adjusted dependent on a weight of the pages.

61. (previously presented) A device according to claim 52, further comprising:

a page acceptance region in which all pages are offset stacked;
first and second stoppers bordering said page acceptance region and disposed at right angles to one another, said stoppers each including a front wall lying on a common axis and a side wall arranged at a right angle thereto;

lateral displacement of pages ensuing along the common axis;

a first paddlewheel is provided in a region of said first stopper, said first paddlewheel being operable to advance first pages with their corners into the right angle of the first stopper, said first paddlewheel providing offset stacking of the first pages of the first job;

a second paddlewheel is provided in a region of said second stopper, said second paddlewheel being operable to advance second pages with their corners into the right angle of the second stopper,

said second paddlewheel providing offset stacking of the second pages of the second job, and

said fixing device is disposed in a region of said first stopper.

62. (previously presented) A device according to claim 61, wherein at least one of said paddlewheels and said fixing device are mounted so as to be movable along an axle for a format change-over of the pages.

63. (previously presented) A device according to claim 62, wherein said at least one of said two paddlewheels and said fixing device are mechanically and rigidly connected with one another.